

STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

**FirstLink
211 Designation
Application**

Case No. PU-09-713

ORDER DESIGNATING STATEWIDE 211 DIALING CODE USER

March 18, 2010

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has designated the 211 dialing code to provide direct access to organizations providing community information and referral services that are currently not available through the 911 emergency code or the 311 police non-emergency code.

On September 24, 2003, the Commission designated the Mental Health Association in North Dakota (MHAND), as the user of the 211 dialing code statewide in North Dakota.

On March 7, 2007, the Commission authorized MHAND to subcontract 211 operations in North Dakota. MHAND subcontracted with FirstLink for the provision of 211 in Cass County.

In its October 30, 2009 letter, MHAND notified the Commission that, due to lack of economic support, it must relinquish its designation as the 211 dialing code user.

On November 2, 2009, the Commission received a letter stating that effective October 30, 2009, FirstLink will temporarily provide statewide 211 operations for North Dakota until a decision is made about 211's future. FirstLink subsequently indicated it would provide statewide 211 operations until March 15, 2010.

On November 23, 2009, FirstLink filed a letter requesting designation as the 211 dialing code user for North Dakota.

On November 25, 2009, the Commission issued a Notice of Opportunity for Hearing providing until January 8, 2010 for comments and requests for hearing. No comments or requests for hearing were received.

On January 14 and January 25, 2010, FirstLink filed affidavits of Cindy Miller, Executive Director of FirstLink, in support of the application. The January 25 affidavit stated that FirstLink is no longer interested in a statewide 211 designation due to a lack of stable long-term funding for the entire state. However, FirstLink would like to be the designated user of the 211 dialing code in Cass County.

On February 10, 2010, the Commission authorized FirstLink to use the 211 dialing code in Cass County.

On February 19, 2010, a meeting of stakeholders was held to assess support for statewide 211 services going forward.

On February 19, 2010, the Commission issued a Notice of Intent to Reopen Proceeding because it had reason to believe that conditions of fact had changed and public interest required the reopening of the proceeding. The Notice listed the following issues:

1. Is any other entity interested in designation as the user of the 211 dial code in North Dakota?
2. Is FirstLink's intended use of the 211 dial code in North Dakota consistent with the FCC intended use of that code?
3. Is it in the public interest for the Commission to authorize FirstLink statewide use of the 211 dialing code, effective when FirstLink's 211 services are sufficiently funded?

On March 4, 2010, another meeting of stakeholders was held to assess support for statewide 211 services.

On March 11, 2010, FirstLink filed an affidavit of Cindy Miller supporting the application and requesting that the Commission authorize FirstLink as the statewide user of the 211 dialing code.


FirstLink's intended use of the 211 dialing code is to create and maintain a database of programs and services, and then to disseminate this information to individuals that dial the 211 code. FirstLink employs trained call specialists to answer information, referral, crisis, listening and support calls. FirstLink is certified in Alliance of Information and Referral Systems and has been a call center for many years.

FirstLink's intended use of the 211 dial code in Cass County is consistent with the FCC intended use of that code and should be designated for such use. It is in the public interest for the Commission to authorize FirstLink statewide use of the 211 dialing code.

Order

FirstLink is authorized to use the 211 dialing code in North Dakota for access to community information and referral services.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION



Tony Clark
Commissioner

Absent

Kevin Cramer
Chairman



Brian P. Kalk
Commissioner